FORUM

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Entered at the Post Office at Flushing, N. Y., as second-class matter, April 20, 1901.

THE THEOSOPHICAL

FORUM

VOL. 7. JUNE, 1901 No. 2

WHAT WE ARE HERE FOR.

BY WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

What then is the universe for, and for what final purpose is man the immortal thinker here in evolution? It is all for the experience and emancipation of the soul, for the purpose of raising the entire mass of manifested matter up to the stature, nature and dignity of conscious god-hood. The great aim is to reach self-consciousness: not through a race or a tribe or some favored nation, but by and through the perfecting after transformation, of the whole mass of matter as well as what we now call soul. Nothing is, or is to be, left out. The aim for present man is his initiation into complete knowledge, and for the other kingdoms below him that they may be raised up gradually from stage to stage to be in time initiated also. This is evolution carried to its highest power; it is a magnificent prospect; it makes of man a god, and gives to every part of nature the possibility of being one day the same; there is strength and nobility in it, for by this no man is dwarfed and belittled, for no one is so originally sinful that he cannot rise above all sin.

OLD CIVILISATIONS.

A law defined by Mr. Darwin, though not originally discovered by him, and one which was never so brilliantly expounded as by Professor Henry Drummond, in his "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," is that of arrested development or degradation, which is, as it were, the dark lining or the "seamy side" of progressive evolution. Briefly stated, this law is, that there is no halt in Nature; that we must have either development or degradation, either advance or retreat and no possible standing still between the two.

This law of retrogression as the inflexible alternative of advance has never been exhaustively applied to human history. Its application in this way would be abundantly fruitful in results, though human life introduces so many new factors, spiritual elements we may call them, that laws derived solely from the animal world are never applicable to man's far more complex history, without great modification and enlargement.

Let us illustrate briefly what the law of retardation and retrogression would mean in relation to the life of nations; using as our examples half a dozen well-known instances, ancient Assyria, Egypt, Phœnicia, Persia, Greece, and Rome. In each of these great civilisations we see the same phenomenon repeated. First the gradual rise of a Power with more light and life than the peoples that surrounded it. Then a long period of strenuous, earnest advance, evolution, development, towards the goal the race-character of the nation had set before it; then, immediately on the attainment of that ideal, as ripeness is followed almost immediately by rottenness, something, we know not what, seems to go out of the nation, a loss of power seems to set in and a rapid degradation takes the place of slow development.

It is possible sometimes to assign an outward cause for this degradation; to point out the introduction of new elements of character, new modes of life, new facilities for abuse of function, and so on, as Gibbon has done most elaborately in the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. But these explanations really explain nothing. The causes assigned are quite inadequate to produce the effect that is clearly visible. Why, for example, should the wealth which utter-

ly corrupted the Romans of Caracalla's time have been quite inoperative in the time of Cincinnatus?

It is useless to say that the luxury which corrupted the later Romans was effective because it was more varied and developed; that the early sons of the Republic only lacked opportunity. This is clearly untrue, for the healthy state which rejects a single cup of wine will not be more tempted by a hogshead. It is useless to say that the conquests of the late Empire, and the sudden expansion and freedom from danger, were the causes of this corruption; for the early conquest of the Samnites meant far more to young Rome than did any later victories over distant Asia and Egypt.

What we see as the real cause of Rome's degradation is a change in the temper and character of the Romans themselves, which took advantage of opportunities of luxury and conquest, but was never caused by them. It is as though, after Rome had reached her culmination, a baser race of men had begun to be born upon the Seven Hills; a deterioration in stock, a loss of stamina, had taken place, whose effect is perfectly evident but whose cause is wrapped in profound mystery, and appears to belong exclusively to the group of human phenomena which find no counterpart in the animal world.

Take the case of the Phœnicians. It may be said that their conquest by the Romans was the cause of their fall. But this explanation is apparent only, not real. If the stock had not degenerated; if Tyre and Sidon, Old Carthage and New, and a score of other strongholds of the Phœnician race, had continued to produce men of the same quality and moral fibre; if the same dauntless mariners had continued to be born, the fall of Carthage would have been nothing more than a mere check in their race-life; new worlds lay before them where they would have been free from the conquering Romans; and we can actually assign no cause whatever why these intrepid mariners, who had sailed away beyond the Pillars of Hercules to the Cassiterides, should not have anticipated the discovery of Columbus by a millenium and a half.

The fact remains that they did not; that the energy and enterprise of the race of seamen definitely stopped and, as far as we can see, lay quite inactive till the days of Venice and mediæval Spain.

We have, therefore, a source of the greatest evolutionary benefit to the human race, a cause that would have secured the survival of

a fit and excellent type, suddenly become inoperative for no assignable reason but the failure of stock in the Phœnicians, and their clearly observable, but still inexplicable, loss of stamina and moral fibre.

The same thing exactly occurred in the case of Greece. What reason can we give why Bacon and Laplace should not have been the immediate successors of Plato and Aristotle; why the Royal Society should not have been founded under Alexander the Great instead of the first of the Stuarts; why the perfect humanity of Shakespeare's drama should not have been the immediate outcome of the divinity and dignity of the drama of Æschylus and Sophocles?

All the conditions were there, all the mental elements lay ready to hand, but—the development did not take place. It is useless to say, in explanation, that these unfoldings can only take place in the following tide of national life; for we are at once confronted with the question:—Why had the tide ceased to flow?

After ripeness comes rottenness. There is the fact, be the explanation what it may. In Egypt, Assyria, old Persia, exactly the same. After development, contraction; after expansion, deterioration. A loss of energy and stamina, a degradation of stock; meaner men born in the cradles of heroes.

Two more facts may be pointed out, first, that in no single case did the arrested development bring the race back to the same point from which the progressive development started; instead of virile strength, the young vigour of the eagle, we have weak luxury, excess, senility, moral bankruptcy. Instead of the first childhood, full of gracious promise and purity, we have the bleared eyes and rheum of second childhood; and following close on its footsteps, mere oblivion. Then the second fact. In no case can we say that the race which for a time held the torch of the world's light became certainly extinct. We have, it is true, a definite loss of vital and reproductive power in over-ripe races; and this is in itself a remarkable and startling phenomenon, almost as inexplicable as the turn of the nation's tide. But this loss of reproductive power is never, as far as we can tell, quite total. The inhabitants of Athens and Rome to-day probably preserve, in comparative purity, the blood of the days of Pericles and the Scipios. The race, it may be, has been crossed with newer stocks; and this, one would expect, should give

a new vital impulse, and a more vigorous resultant race. But this is not so. The old blood remains, but the old fire of genius and energy have burnt lower and lower.

In case of races far older than the Greeks and Romans, we can see degradation almost carried to its utmost point. The Egyptian fellaheen are, as far as ethnography can tell, the very same race as the men of Rameses; but to splendid light has followed squalid misery, the genius for domination has dwindled into servitude. The old Chaldeans, who passed the lamp of their life on to the Assyrians, by whom it was given, degraded and diminished, to the Jews, still linger in most perfect racial purity in the water-carriers of Caucasian Tiflis, half-naked, half-savage, and utterly incapable of new advance.

Turn now to the new Continent. In Mexico, Yucatan, and Arizona, are miles and miles of splendid ruins, whose very origin is lost in impenetrable or at least unpenetrated darkness. No one carries on the tradition of their source, nor remembers the ancient Assyria and Egypt of the new world; and even when the Spaniards fell upon the Incas and the Aztecs these latter had utterly lost or neglected to hand on the memory of far older races that preceded them.

Here we have the step beyond the second childhood; here we have "mere oblivion," absolute and complete. And yet we cannot believe that a total cessation of reproduction took place here in the forests of Yucatan and the mountains of Arizona, any more than in the valleys of Greece, and on the banks of the Tiber. Wherever there are fair captive women, the blood of a conquered race will be continued. The half wild natives of America must contain the blood of magnificent ancestors whose monuments are not inferior to, though different from, those of Egypt and Rome.

Have we any guarantee that the process of degradation in the latter has reached its limit? Is there any stand-still, or must the deterioration run its utmost limits?

The process that degraded Arizona and Yucatan is, it seems, universal; and that which has taken place there may, nay, must, one day take place for not only Greece and Rome, but for the juvenescent races who destroyed the world of the Cæsars, and the last Greek remnant by the Golden Horn.

The process is universal, after ripeness, rottenness, and we can place no limits to the lengths that deterioration may go. The half savage fellaheen, the half-savage water-carriers of Tiflis, the entirely savage Indians of Arizona and Yucatan, are demonstrably results of the law of arrested development, which substitutes irresistible decay for growth. And if these demonstrably degenerated groups possess among them every attribute of savagery, we cannot say that any attribute of savagery may not be the last and uttermost outcome of a past civilisation. There is no wild jungle of cannibals and savage men where there are not buried cities.

May we not, therefore, be justified in assuming that even the most degraded savages whom we can select, the dwarf Andaman islanders, the flat headed aborigines of Australia, may also be the descendants of once great races, whose past is so far behind us that the oblivion which covers them is utter, absolute, and complete?

OUR WORK.

This is a cycle of individual work. That has on several occasions been very clearly stated. In this cycle the work has to progress through our own "self-induced and self-devised efforts." We get our encouragement from within, where there is a vast reservoir to draw upon, a reservoir co-extensive with the universal Soul. THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM has lately contained suggestions from several people as to what exactly our present work is. So I now venture to throw my view in with the others.

The question is: What work are we now to do? We have our duty in the world as individuals, but that is not under consideration. As individuals we may be members of any number of other movements without our position in the Theosophical Society being in any way affected. Our point is: what are we, as individual members of the Theosophical Society, of whom the Theosophical Society is composed, to do?

It will readily be admitted that the work of the Theosophical Society is positive, constructive, active, as witness the nature of its declared objects—to form, to investigate, to promote, to demonstrate. And if we consider for a moment the constitution of the Theosophical Society we shall better be able to decide what its work is now and at any time. By constitution I do not mean the formal printed document which we take pleasure in amending from time to time; but its natural constitution, its "principles," whether three, seven, or ten. I have, however, seen the first formal constitution of the Theosophical Society which is a written document signed by H. P. Blavatsky and all the early members. The exact wording of the objects as therein stated is as follows: "The objects of the Society are to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the Universe." Perhaps our present way of stating the objects is more definite, but the objects themselves remain unaltered.

In a subsequent document the objects were greatly expanded (being those set out in Chap. 3 of the *Key to Theosophy,* particularly at page 48, 1st Edn.) and an attempt was made to describe the natural constitution of the Theosophical Society. It was, perhaps, too clearly described for the description was soon dropped. Article XI of the formal constitution states that there are three sections

(principles) of the Theosophical Society, of which the first (the Causal Self) is composed exclusively of the Initiates and the third (the personality) is the exoteric Theosophical Society. The second section (the Antaskarana, the link between the Causal Self and the personality) is composed of all those members in whose lives Theosophy has become a living active power. The exact words of this article are quoted in The English Theosophist, Vol. II, 162. But even apart from the archaic official statement it is very certain that to-day the Theosophical Society represents the result of an effort of The Lodge to form a body through which it could work in the outer world.

That body can be regarded from two points of view. Either it is a grown-up entity of much worldly experience and wisdom, or it is a comparitively youthful body, a little over three years old. An examination of the history of the Theosophical Movement has inclined me to adopt the latter view and to look upon the period 1875 to 1898 as a period of gestation. Certainly the present condition of the Theosophical Society has more analogies with youth than with age. But whichever view is adopted the main fact is that the Theosophical Society is an entity formed by the energies of its Causal Self, the Lodge. It is an "incarnation" of The Lodge: not, of course, by any means a full incarnation—that is for the future; but it is one of a long series of attempts, such as the individual Soul itself makes in its successive earth lives.

In this thought will be found the answer to our question. "It is the Master's work to preserve the true philosophy, but the help of the companions is needed to rediscover and promulgate it," (*Ocean*, p. 6,) just as it is the work of the Soul to preserve the true knowledge it has gained, but the help of the personality is needed to formulate and express that knowledge in earth life. (*Lucifer*, Vol. V, Art. "Genius," p. 229).

The work of the Theosophical Society is therefore twofold, "to collect and to diffuse." The Soul of the Theosophical Society has, in the books of H. P. Blavatsky and in other ways, recorded the knowledge that it desires the world to have at this time and the work of the members of the Theosophical Society is, first, to learn and secondly, to teach the Theosophic philosophy.

It may be said that there is nothing of this to be found in the formal constitution and very properly so. We have to leave the door open to all comers without restrictions, creeds or codes. But the real is often different from the appearance. Ask a man what he is and he will perhaps tell you that he is a stock jobber. We know of course, that he is not: we know that he is a soul which is gaining experience in order to fulfil its appointed work in the cosmos. Nor do we by making the gateway high and wide, easy of access, deceive anyone, for our work is clearly apparent from our name. We do not call ourselves the Brotherhood Organization, The Asiatic Society, The Psychical Research Society or The Miracle Club, we shut no one out: but surely, notwithstanding the perfect freedom that is provided for, every one must see that The *Theosophical* Society is intimately connected with Theosophy.

The Initiates have formed The Lodge the better to preserve the philosophy: we, the companions, the members of the Theosophical Society, have formed lodges (or branches) the better to rediscover and promulgate it.

But it has been said that the time has passed for active propaganda: that that work is no longer needed, that the ideas that have been sown broadcast, throughout the world, have flowered into distorted minor movements, which the workers should join to set them straight and at the same time that the Theosophical Society meetings should be given up to Christian Scientists, Socialists, Spiritualists, and men of Science so that we may learn from them and perhaps set them straight also.

It may be that in a few hundred years we should begin to do this. By then the Theosophical Society will have grown strong: its principles will have become established; its members will have become sufficiently numerous to be able usefully to branch out in the direction indicated; but now, companions, (and I only speak to the companions) we have a more pressing duty, one that cannot be set aside and for the due performance of which we are, in numbers, hardly strong enough. That duty is, first, to do all in our power by study and otherwise to fit ourselves to help, and secondly, *to teach them*: to give to others as the Masters have given to us.

Do not be afraid to promulgate the philosophy actively, constructively, positively. I do not think the time for active propa-

ganda has passed, nor that that work is no longer needed, nor that there is any present danger of crystallizing the teachings. Rather is there the danger of those ideas becoming, through want of definiteness, vaporised into thin air. Has some part of the stream of teaching overflowed its banks, mixed with the dust of earth and turned to mire? Shall we therefore try to stop the flow of the clear waters and take to analysing clay? Our energies will not, I think, run to it. Mud as a source of water supply, is unprofitable. Let us rather broaden the channels and flood the world with the pure fluid.

Is it conceivable that the time to teach the true nature of man, the reality of the soul, the fact of rebirth, the universal reign of Law, the unity of all beings, has passed? Can we no longer with safety actively promulgate the ethics of Compassion, of Infinite Toleration, of Brotherhood. Have we reached every soul who hungers for the bread of wisdom, and thirsts for the water of life—food and drink for the soul that we can give, that has been placed in our hands to give?

We look upon the distorted minor movements and wonder at their success? Do you know why our Movement does not grow as it should, while they are filled to overflowing? It is because those who are looking for Theosophy, who have as much right to it as we have, *cannot find it* and drift into movements which, whatever their merits, at least make themselves known. And the distorted ideas take possession of the minds of the seekers and they are spoiled for a lifetime. Should we have found Theosophy if our devoted predecessors (to whom we owe unfailing gratitude) had not held high the light before the world, had not continually taught Karma and Reincarnation? And how are those who seek the philosophy to find it unless we take every legitimate means to keep it before the world. The thought that even one seeker should fail through our neglect is terrible.

So let us make our small Theosophic Lodges what the very name implies, places of Theosophic instruction. The Great Lodge, through the books we have and otherwise, shall be the teacher; we, the Companions, will repeat what we ourselves have learned.

Let the meetings be public; let them be well advertised, with free questions and discussion. Have bookstalls with our literature

attractively displayed. Have a free lending library and take the risk of loosing the books.

It is an age of individual work. Then let each individual member of the Lodge see to it that he does his work and not wait for it to be done by others, or what is most likely to happen, be left undone. Because it is an age of individual work there is greater necessity for promoting the feeling of unity with our companions who, with us, form the Lodge or Branch so that it, being also an individual, may do its individual work too.

Thus we may succeed in establishing in the world centres of instruction, small lodges which shall be links between the world and the Great Lodge, Antaskaranas along which its spiritual inspiration may flow: and we may as H. P. Blavatsky wished keep the Theosophical Society, a body now overshadowed by its Higher Manas, alive and active until its 77th year, when the world-messenger for the 20th century is due; and there will happen in the Theosophical Society that psychological event which, in the case of a human infant, takes place in its 7th year.

PREJUDICE.

If we could but understand that the imperfect soul can only receive approximate truth, it would save much in time, energy and hurtful contentions. But we are all prone to think that we alone possess the pearl of truth; that we alone stand directly under the ray, while our brothers are somewhat, or very much, in the shadow.

And, so we drift upon the shoals and quicksands of narrowness and dogmatism against which we have been warned from the beginning. Prejudice against a thing—whether a person, nation or doctrine—acts as an obscurant, shutting off the light that would reveal the truth about that thing. If one seeing the danger steers clear of these shoals and quicksands in the beginning of the journey and after progress has been made permits prejudice against another to enter his mind, the last state of that man is worse than the first.

His thoughts have gained additional power and when turned against another in criticism or hard judgment the black forces—always awaiting such opportunity—sieze these thoughts as they issue from his mind and, rejoicing like a band of harpies, display them before the eyes of the victim in distorted form, causing him to see his brother even more at fault than he had believed, and deeming it his duty to give this out as truth to all who will listen, he becomes, by the law of reaction, the thing he had taken that other to be.

Then, unable to creep round, under or over this "Dweller of the Threshold," he wonders at his impeded progress. If he still makes earnest efforts to aid humanity his good angel—also waiting *his* opportunity—may after a time be able to make these continuous efforts a ladder whereby he may climb and stand for an instant beyond the planes of illusion.

Then, if like the tortured soul in Olive Schreiner's wonderful Dream, he realizes *that his brother is himself, that both are God*, he descends to earth full of humility and love and sees that after all the beam was in his own eye and that only by the power born of impersonality can he aid in removing the mote from his brother's eye.

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS.

PRELIMINARY NOTICE.

A few weeks ago, through the intervention of a highly valued friend, we received copies of two very remarkable essays by Dr. R. M. Bucke, of London, Ontario, one of which deserves to be known to all our readers, and not only known but marked and inwardly digested. In this essay, to which the author has given the title "Cosmic Consciousness," Dr. Bucke, working from an impulse which is evidently original, has, with great force and clearness reached and stated some of our most important principles,—evidently working without any knowledge of the books we are so familiar with, in which the same conclusions have been stated from so many points of view. We can benefit by this fine essay in two ways: first, we may get that stimulus of thought and feeling which always comes with a new and striking statement of a familiar truth; and, secondly, we may gain renewed confidence in our own conclusions, by seeing the quite inevitable way in which an independent seeker after truth is led towards our goal, as all roads lead to Rome.

* * *

The main thought of Dr. Bucke's essay, which explains his title, is thus stated:

"I have next to say that the human mind is now in the very act of making this supposed step—is now in the very act of stepping from the plane of self consciousness to a higher plane, which I call Cosmic Consciousness.

"I have in the last three years collected twenty-three cases of this co-called Cosmic Consciousness, and what little further I have time to say at present will be based on the actual facts belonging to them.

"First, as to the age at which, if at all, Cosmic Consciousness is attained. In twenty-one of the twenty-three cases I have been able to fix this with considerable certainty and accuracy, and I find that illumination took place: In two cases at the age of thirty, in one case at the age of thirty-one, in three cases at the age of thirty-two, in three cases at the age of thirty-three, in two cases at the age of thirty-four, in five cases at the age of thirty-five, in one case

at the age of thirty-seven, in two cases at the age of thirty-eight, in one case at the age of thirty-nine, and in one case at the age of forty.

"Thus, then, the new consciousness obeys the first supposed necessary condition and appears when the organism is at its highest point of efficiency and excellence.

"You will please keep steadily in mind that I claim that what I call Cosmic Consciousness is not simply an expansion or extension of the self conscious mind with which we are all familiar, but the superaddition of a function as distinct from any possessed by the average man as self consciousness is distinct from any function possessed by one of the higher animals. It is my purpose now to attempt to give you some idea of what this new function is, and to show you (or at least to give you some hints) how the Cosmic Conscious differs from the merely self conscious, mind. But I warn you that with the best intentions in the world I shall not be able to make this at all clear to you, and that if you desire enlightenment on this point you will have to seek it in the books that contain the explanations of these men themselves—in, for instance, the Upanishads and Sutras, which give us the experience of one of the earliest cases, that, namely, of Gautama the Buddha; in the Epistles of Paul; in the Shakspere sonnets; in Dante's "Divine Comedy" (especially in the "Paradise"); in the works of Honoré de Balzac (especially in "Louis Lambert" and "Seraphita"); in Behme's "Aurora" and "Three Principles;" in the works of William Blake and those of Edward Carpenter; and, lastly, in the "Leaves of Grass" and other works of Walt Whitman."

* * *

One sentence in the passage just quoted shows how unfamiliar Dr. Bucke is with many books which have become matters of common knowledge for us: than in which he speaks of the Upanishads as containing the experience of Gautama the Buddha. Shakya Muni or Gautama Buddha,—by whichever title we speak of prince Siddhartha after his illumination,—was born, as we know, some twenty-five hundred years ago; it is quite safe to say that the oldest material in the Upanishads is not so near to Buddha as Buddha is to us; it must have come into existence before the great historical development of the Brahman caste began; and we know that, in

Buddha's day, that caste had not only developed, but had had time to reach an advanced stage of degeneration. Dr. Bucke continues:

"But the great difficulty has always been and is still that the Cosmic Conscious and self conscious minds are so far apart that words coming from the former are often strange and meaningless to the latter. They contain, as Paul expresses it, a wisdom not of this world—a wisdom, consequently, which is very apt not to be understood, and for that reason to be accounted no wisdom at all, but foolishness. I ought to say further, in the way of introduction, that though Cosmic Consciousness has certain fixed elements which give to it a clear individuality, yet that the range and variety of mind upon the plane of Cosmic Consciousness appears to be still greater than the range and variety of mind on the plane of self consciousness—just as the range and variety of mind on the self conscious plane is far greater than are these in any given species on the plane of simple consciousness. So that, in all ways, the men possessed of the new faculty are liable to differ and do differ enormously and in all directions one from the other; some of them being, for instance, supreme poets, others religious founders, prophets and apostles, others great artists, and so on. Also, I ought to say that, while some of them are so obviously great that they are counted superhuman, others are not to outward seeming strikingly different from their merely self conscious contemporaries. Even a casual study, however, of the characters and lives of these great men will reveal the plain fact that both by the intellect and by the moral nature they are enormously in advance of their self conscious contemporaries."

* * *

It becomes evident, as we go on, that Dr. Bucke sees clearly the truth of Regeneration; the great Transmutation, in virtue of which the light from above is unveiled in us, initiating us into the universal Soul, through which initiation we grow at one with our other selves and with the one Self of all. Very valuable and instructive is the series of comparisons which Dr. Bucke makes between the illuminations of some of the great Regenerate, in whom shone the "light rare, untellable, lighting the very world:"

"First, there are certain phenomena connected with the onset, or oncoming, of the new faculty—which is usually, perhaps always, sudden, instantaneous. Among these the most striking is the sudden

sense of being immersed in flame or in a brilliant light; this occurs entirely without warning or outward cause, and may happen at noonday or in the middle of the night. In order to give some notion of this dazzling subjective light I will show you what a few of these men have said about it.

"Paul (in his speech to Agrippa) said: 'As I journeyed to Damascus I saw on the way a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun.' Then he heard the voice and then was caught up into the third heaven and heard unspeakable words. But the initial fact was the subjective light.

"In the night called by the Arabs Al Kader—in the month of Ramadan—in the fortieth year of his age—in the cavern of Mount Hara—Mohammed heard a voice calling upon him; immediately thereafter, or at the same instant, a flood of light broke upon him of such intolerable splendor that he swooned away. On regaining his senses he beheld an angel in a human form, which, approaching from a distance, displayed a silken cloth covered with written characters. The angel said to him: 'Read.' Mohammed said he did not know how to read, but immediately afterwards his understanding was illumined and he read what was written on the cloth.

"In the first canto of the "Paradise" Dante gives an account of the oncoming of the Cosmic sense in his case. And as descriptive of the commencement of the series of his experiences he has these words: 'On a sudden day seemed to be added to day as if He who is able had adorned the heaven with another sun.'

"The report made by Whitman of the same occurrence is in very similar language. He says:

" 'As in a swoon one instant,
Another sun, ineffable, full dazzles me,
And all the orbs I knew—and brighter, unknown orbs;
One instant of the future land, Heaven's land.' "

* * *

Very admirable and worthy of note in the passage which immediately follows, where Dr. Bucke expresses in his own words the new and awakened life of the soul:

"The dazzling, sudden, unexpected, subjective light, then, is usually the first thing known of the change that is taking place. It is usually succeeded by alarm. For a longer or shorter time the

person fears that he is becoming insane. Very often a voice is heard and the form of the person speaking may be seen. These phenomena (the light, the voice, the person seen) soon all pass away and the essential elements of the new order dawn upon the mind. These essential elements are a consciousness of the Cosmos, or, in other words, a consciousness of the life and order of the universe; not, you will please understand, a knowledge of this, but a consciousness of it—just as self consciousness, when it comes, gives the person not simply a hearsay or learned knowledge of himself as a separate and distinct individual, but something far deeper—*i. e.,* a consciousness of himself as a distinct personality.

"With the intellectual illumination comes an indescribable moral elevation—an intense and exalted joyfulness, and, along with this, a sense of immortality; not merely a belief in a future life—that would be a small matter—but a consciousness that the life now being lived is eternal—death being seen as a trivial incident which does not affect its continuity. Further, there are annihilation of the sense of sin and an intellectual competency not simply surpassing the old, but on a new and higher plane."

* * *

In the pages which follow, Dr. Bucke gathers a few of the most remarkable declarations made by those who had passed through the new birth, as to their spiritual outlook. The first, Gautama Buddha, we are so familiar with that no quotation is needed, except, perhaps, this very wise sentence touching Nirvana: "In Buddhism Nirvana, which literally means 'a blowing out,' as of a candle, is the word which stands for Cosmic Consciousness—the 'blowing out,' or 'extinction,' being not that of the soul, as sometimes supposed, but of the desires and instincts which belong to the self-conscious mind and which are thought to stand in the way of the attainment of the Cosmic sense." Equally well known are the words of Paul: "I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ fourteen years ago (whether in the body or out of the body I know not); such a one caught up even to the third heaven—into Paradise —and heard unspeakable words."

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Less familiar, perhaps, to most of us are the declarations of Dante, whom Dr. Bucke counts as one of the Regenerate:

"In the case of Dante there was the same initial earnestness of character combined with unusual spirituality, the same instantaneous illumination. He was of the typical age at the time, namely, thirty-five years. There was the intense subjective light. The voice—that is, the duplex personality that belongs to the new condition—spoke to him. There was the same consternation, followed immediately by the same intellectual illumination and the same moral exaltation.

"The evidence of Dante's illumination in his great work, "The Divine Comedy," is overwhelming, but I have only space here for one short quotation, namely, the passage in which he describes the oncoming of the Cosmic sense. He says: 'Beatrice was standing with her eyes wholly fixed on the eternal wheels, and on her I fixed my eyes from thereabove removed. Looking at her, I inwardly became such as Glaucus became on tasting of the herb which made him consort in the sea of the other gods. Transhumanization cannot be signified in words; therefore, let the example suffice for him to whom grace reserves experience. If I was only what of mé thou didst last create, O Love that governest the heavens, Thou knowest who with Thy light didst lift me.'

"Beatrice (*i. e.*, 'making blessed') is Dante's name for Cosmic Consciousness. He says that when his illumination took place he fixed his eyes on the Cosmic sense, and the eyes of the Cosmic sense were wholly fixed on the eternal wheels (in the language of Gautama, 'on the chain of causation'—both expressions meaning the same thing—*i. e.*, the life and order of the universe). Then he says: Looking upon this new sense that had come to me, I became transhumanized into a god. He says that of course this change that had been wrought in him cannot be expressed in words, and that no one will be able to understand it until he himself experiences it, and, like Paul, he does not know whether at that time he was in heaven or upon the earth, whether he continued during the experience in the body or whether for a time he left the body."

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Considerable interest attaches to Dr. Bucke's attempt to show that cases of Cosmic Consciousness are becoming more frequent in our modern world; a position he reaches from considering thirteen typical cases. While his conclusion, taken in its widest sense, is

true—that, as time goes on, the number of the Awakened increases,—we may yet find his method of demonstrating it insufficient. For to come to a strict conclusion we should have to have a complete list of Initiates—something which would be rather hard to get. But this in no wise weakens Dr. Bucke's main conclusion: that the Great Awakening has again and again taken place; and that its reality is demonstrable on as good evidence as that which supports any fact in the whole range of our knowledge. We are glad to learn that Dr. Bucke is setting forth his researches in a book of considerable length, bearing the same title: "Cosmic Consciousness;" we hope to be able to give more definite particulars of this book in a later number.

DREAM AND REALITY.

A man of the State of Chêng was one day gathering fuel, when he came across a startled deer, which he pursued and killed. Fearing lest any one should see him, he hastily concealed the carcass in a ditch and covered it with plaintain leaves, rejoicing excessively at his good fortune. By and by, he forgot the place where he had put it, and, thinking he must have been dreaming, he set off towards home, humming over the affair on his way.

Meanwhile, a man who had overheard his words, acted upon them, and went and got the deer. The latter, when he reached his house, told his wife, saying, "A woodman dreamt he had got a deer, but he did not know where it was. Now I have got the deer; so his dream was a reality." "It is you," replied the wife, "who have been dreaming you saw a woodman. Did he get the deer? and is there really such a person? It is you who have got the deer: how, then, can his dream be a reality?" "It is true," assented the husband, "that I have got the deer. It is therefore of little importance whether the woodman dreamt the deer or I dreamt the woodman."

Now when the woodman reached his home, he became much annoyed at the loss of the deer; and in the night he actually dreamt where the deer then was, and who had got it. So the next morning he proceeded to the place indicated in his dream,—and there it was. He then took legal steps to recover possession; and when the case came on, the magistrate delivered the following judgment:— "The plaintiff began with a real deer and an alleged dream. He now comes forward with a real dream and an alleged deer. The defendant really got the deer which plaintiff said he dreamt, and is now trying to keep it; while, according to his wife, both the woodman and the deer are but the figments of a dream, so that no one got the deer at all. However, here is a deer, which you had better divide between you."

:—Lieh Tzu, in Chinese Literature, *by H. A. Giles.*

ANCIENT AND MODERN PHYSICS.

We have all felt the desire to have Mr. T. E. Willson's admirable essays on ANCIENT AND MODERN PHYSICS in a collected form, for convenient study and permanent use. This can be done if one hundred members send me a postal card promising to take one copy each, at 50 cents. The book can be brought out within a month.

CHARLES JOHNSTON.

Flushing, New York.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS T. S. A.

All members of the T. S. A. who have not filled out and returned to the Secretary the cards which were sent to them before the Convention are requested to do so at once. It is hoped that each member will realize the great amount of work which the Secretary has to do, and that he will endeavor to lighten it as much as he can. Things must be systematized at the Secretary's office, but little can be done until all names are in that should be in. This notice is given because it is known that there are many members doing active work at present who have not returned the card. In one case not a single member of one of our largest branches has responded. So please remember to send in your cards and thereby help the Secretary to more fitly serve you.

Secretary T. S. A.
P. O. Box 1584, New York.

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

Founded by H. P. BLAVATSKY at New York in 1875.

The Society does not pretend to be able to establish at once a universal brotherhood among men, but only strives to create the nucleus of such a body. Many of its members believe that an acquaintance with the world's religions and philosophies will reveal, as the common and fundamental principle underlying these, that "spiritual identity of all Souls with the Oversoul" which is the basis of true brotherhood; and many of them also believe that an appreciation of the finer forces of nature and man will still further emphasize the same idea.

The organization is wholly unsectarian, with no creed, dogma, nor personal authority to enforce or impose; neither is it to be held responsible for the opinions of its members, who are expected to accord to the beliefs of others that tolerance which they desire for their own.

The following proclamation was adopted at the Convention of the Society held at Boston, April, 1895:

"The Theosophical Society in America by its delegates and members in Convention assembled, does hereby proclaim fraternal good will and kindly feeling toward all students of Theosophy and members of Theosophical Societies wherever and however situated. It further proclaims and avers its hearty sympathy and association with such persons and organizations in all theosophical matters except those of government and administration, and invites their correspondence and co-operation.

"To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race, or religious belief, who aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness, and unselfish regard one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely proffers its services.

"It joins hands with all religions and religious bodies whose efforts are directed to the purification of men's thoughts and the bettering of their ways, and it avows its harmony therewith. To all scientific societies and individual searchers after wisdom upon whatever plane and by whatever righteous means pursued, it is and will be grateful for such discovery and unfoldment of Truth as shall serve to announce and confirm a *scientific basis for ethics.*

"And lastly, it invites to its membership those who, seeking a higher life hereafter, would learn to know the *Path* to tread in this."

There are no dues.

The expenses of the Theosophical Society in America are met by voluntary contributions, which should be sent to A. H. Spencer, Treasurer T. S. in A., Box 1584, New York, N. Y.

Applications for membership should be addressed to the Secretary T. S. A., P. O. Box 1584, New York.